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# Tales of BILLZAC

Being extracts from

DIGGER'S DIARY

of Stunts and Stories

Romance

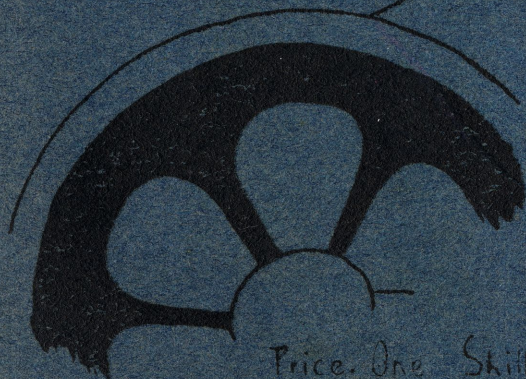
Comedy and Drama

Written during

the Great War

by

Lieutenant F.E. TROTTER, M.M.



Most of which were  
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"The Daily Mail" (Brisbane)  
"The Courier" (Brisbane)  
"Aussie" (Sydney)  
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# TALES OF BILLZAC

BEING EXTRACTS  
FROM A DIGGER'S  
DIARY

BY

LIEUT. F. E. TROTTER, M.M.

'LANHILL," HORATIO STREET  
ANNERLEY

BRISBANE :

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LIEUT. R. E. TROTTER, M.M.

LANKILL, HONORABLE STREET  
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I have to thank the "Daily Mail" (Brisbane), "Courier" (Brisbane), "Aussie" (Sydney), "Bulletin" (Sydney), "The Age" (Melbourne), and "Cheerio" (Cambridge, England) for permission to republish these efforts of mine, which were originally published in papers mentioned above at divers times. Each article truthfully portrays its respective subject as I saw it, excepting the story concerning Julia, into which, combined with facts, I have interwoven a few strands of fiction, to make it a palatable story.

F. E. TROTTER

*Brisbane*



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G. E. TROTTER

Brisbane





# TALES OF BILLZAC.

## JUST A GLIMPSE OF EGYPT.

Cairo—weird, mysterious city of the East; cosmopolitan, though Egyptian and Arabic are its essentials. Every nation of the world well represented there, though the great multitude is consisted of the dark-skinned natives of Egypt; the air filled with the babel of Arabic tongues—the chanting, lazy, squabbling Arabs, clapping their hands all day long to the time of their strange chants, instead of working with them; slow in movement, unless well-paid to do otherwise. Land of veiled women—of hidden things; nation of buried nations—of buried civilisations—of lost greatness. Ancient city of flat roofs, of cloud-piercing minarets, of noble, great white domes. A nest of sin and treachery; a picture of gaiety, of mournfulness; a nightmare of hideousness, a garden of grandeur and beauty; food for the student, satisfaction for the inquisitive; a sensation of adventure that lures and beckons the traveller to return again and yet again; a jewel of sparkling life set in a mighty vast of monotony and eternal sand—such is Cairo.

Along its streets there come the poor, the blind, the maimed, the horrible deformed creatures of humanity, freaks of nature, the starving, all crying for

“Bakshish! Bakshish!”

Pedlars just as numerous, with their gaudy knick-knacks, demanding fabulous prices; and bootblacks squirming at one's feet, each pest fighting for mastery and supreme place like so many wolves. Then there are



bazaars, where all that is beautiful or archaic or quaint meets the eye—rich carpets that have been hand-woven in the hills of Turkestan; priceless pearls from the pools of the Persian Gulf; exquisite perfumes from the vales of Araby; choice embroideries tear-stained by the captives of the harem; incense, love-potions and love-charms; tobaccos scented with fragrant amber—everything that smells of the East, the East, the ever-alluring East.

Then there is the river, where one can sit and watch the sun setting away over beyond the palm trees. This is the hour of Arab prayer, and everywhere one sees them groveling on their praying mats, or rapt absorbed in earnest devotion. From around the bend of willows and reeds, come the yachts with their snow-white sails, and the house-boats, the “dahabiyah,” moving up and down the river’s course, while the blue sky turns to gold, the gold to deep orange, which in turn becomes overflooded with a pink flush, and the scarlet streaks creep in, and the scarlet streaks turn to carmine, and the grey shadows come and deepen, and the wild-fowl fly past in dark straggling V’s over the dull, metallic surface of the great, smooth-flowing Nile.

Night has set in, but to realise the beauty of the night in Egypt, one must go to the desert. Night! an Egyptian night on the Desert! It overwhelms one with wonder and awe! Beneath the great star bejewelled purple dome of Eastern sky, flooded with the mellow light of the bright silver moon, there stands a world of silence. Rising into the night to meet the heavens are the dull outlines of the old-world tombs of Gizah, the Pyramid of Cheops, that of Chephreen, and that of Menkaura.

Below is the Temple of olden age, and one can imagine the priests still treading its ancient floors. It is strange, this

“Treading where the Pharoahs trod—  
E’en in the precincts of their God.”

Before us is the mighty Sphinx himself, grim and gaunt and monstrous; and it seems that this great monster knows your mind and your heart, knows the world, speaking to you, and telling you wonderful tales of



history, or romance, of sorrow and of joy, right from the time when he himself was carved out of the one gigantic rock, to the time when one of Napoleon's cannon balls knocked his nose off. Whatever his purpose, there he is, the silent witness of five thousand years of the world's history. To make the place more weird, there arises a high, shrill wimpering, rising and swelling, ending in a long, weary wail, then silence again. 'Twas a jackal on the desert. The only other thing in sight may be a long line of camels moving as noiselessly as ghosts across the sands, with the silent, swaying white-draped figures of arabs perched on top of them, but not a sound anywhere—not the very faintest sound. Nothing but the silent desert and the black shadows of the hills. It is grand, but it is terrible too. The great desert stretching away and away until it is lost in the shadows. Then gradually the sad whisper of the wind may begin to sigh across it, seeming to tell of tragedies and desolations, of weary, lost, and thirsty travellers. It is the most solemn thing I have ever seen in my life.





## THE LANDING AT GALLIPOLI.

APRIL 25th, 1915.

After a week of monotony combined with expectancy, on board the transports in Mudros Bay, at Lemnos Island, we pulled up anchor one Saturday night and slowly made our way from the island to a safe anchorage within easy distance of our ultimate landing place; and again at midnight the transports glided silently one by one to the rendezvous in the Bay of Saros, there to await the beginning of our operations.

Tense excitement, concealed behind a calm exterior, prevailed on board, as the programme of coming events was discussed, a victorious entry into Constantinople was speculated on, a last note was dashed off home, then a quiet pipe, and thoughts of what the dawn might bring. Above every other thrill, a sense of duty, spirit of extreme patriotism, a love for right, and loyalty to the Empire pervaded all.

Sunday, April 25th, 1915. Of those who were there, who will forget it? While it was yet dark the first parties set off to invade Turkey. Stealthily and slowly through the darkness they went, no sound emitting. Putting the full value of all their training in night operations into this one occasion, the boys, reckless as regards discipline at drill, made up for it in this one time when every fibre and nerve must be controlled.

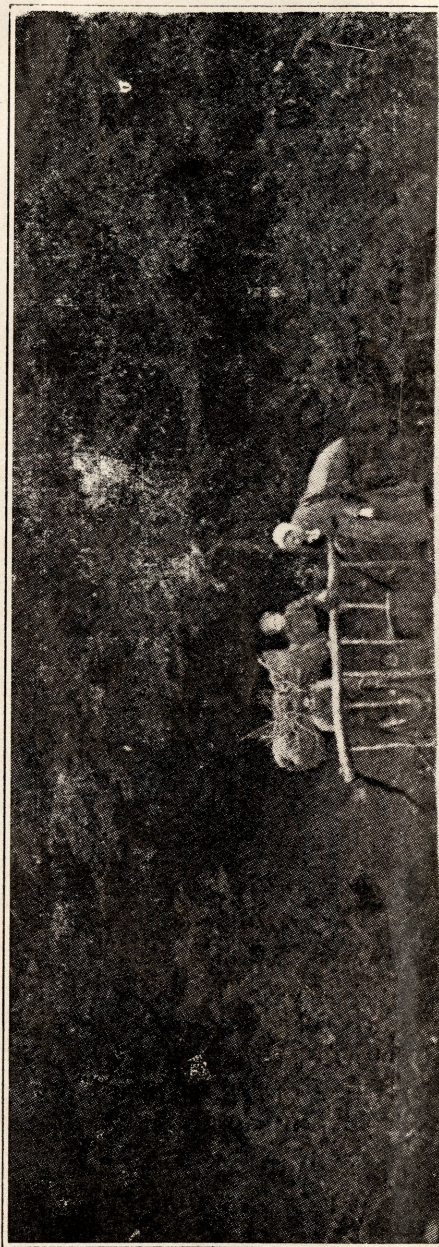
A faint tinge of light lit up the horizon in the east, and the men-o'-war and the transports in the bay were dimly outlined in the first faint light of early dawn. The mountains in front now showed up clearer and clearer, but there was no sign of life—only silence. Then the boats scraped on the bottom of the sea bed, and the hill in front became a thing of life. Machine guns and rifles began to rattle out their protests in quick, sharp, staccato notes, and bullets came whizzing down from the ridge in front like a hailstorm, hitting few, but







A FRENCH  
FOREST  
BEFORE  
THE WAR.



SAME FOREST  
AFTER  
HEAVY  
BOMBARDMENT.





dropping close around. Not a shot was returned to the enemy, but with a great shout that broke up their silence and relaxed their strained nerves our boys climbed out of the boats, jumped into the water waist deep, and waded ashore. Like the Romans of old invaded Britain so were the Australians now invading Turkey.

There was only one thing fixed in their minds—they must capture that ridge in front and drive the enemy inland. Once on shore, there was no going back—defeat meant to be driven helplessly into the sea, so win they must. With loaded rifles and fixed bayonets, yet not returning a shot at the enemy, into the face of that awful fire, up that steep, almost precipitous hill, dashed our lads, if climbing laboriously against that murderous fire could be called dashing. Into the teeth of the enemy's machine guns they went, never thinking of turning back.

On and on, gaining ever nearer to the top; sometimes slipping, sometimes falling, now a bullet grazing the ear, now a comrade dropping dead at the side. On, always on. God! would that climb never end? Beads of perspiration started from the forehead, yet were fanned to an icy coldness by the early morning breeze. After weary, anxious toiling up those steeps, with a shout, flourishing their bayonets, our boys made a final dash forward. Those Turks liked not the thought of cold steel turned on them, ceased their firing, and fled as though the Furies were let loose after them, as indeed they might well have been—those that pursued. And the first great feat was accomplished—the enemy driven back, the first ridge was taken—Australia had conquered.

Whilst all this was going on, the transports in the bay were busy, emptying out their precious cargo—the balance of the 1st Australian Division, who were acting as supports and reserves, into the awaiting rowing boats, strings of them attached to towing pinnaces. Now the Turkish guns began to throw shrapnel over the transports, and over the course to the shore. That bay was very busy. Lines of boats were being filled with soldiers being towed shorewards. When the boat scraped sand, it was—out into the water, help those who were



sinking, and make for the shore. The engineers were busy building a pier, the wireless people were erecting their station on the shore; donkeys were being landed for the Gurkhas, who were rendering aid by taking ammunition to the front line. All this and more was accomplished early on the first day by our troops in that alien land, with deadly odds warring against them. There was a hurried roll call for each lot of supports and reserves as they were landed on the beach, where Beachy Bill had already begun to take his toll, and off they'd go until they came to a quiet gully, where they discarded their heavy packs, taking only their haversacks full of rations; and with bayonets fixed and magazines charged with ammunition, set off over those shell and bullet-ridden hills of Gaba Tepe to join the front line of attack.

It was difficult to keep proper connection between the various groups. One battalion became mixed with another, one brigade mingled with another brigade on that wild day when all was confusion in a confusing place. Those on their way to join up with the front line now began to have their eyes opened. Why, thought they, were those soldiers lying there on so dangerous a ridge, stretched out on their backs as though calmly taking their rest, or sprawled out on their faces, regardless of what was going on? Alas! these were they who had already made the supreme sacrifice. And—thought the newcomers—how long would it be before they themselves would be like them?

But only a momentary thought, and then on again with a wilder rush to avenge those fallen ones. It was pot luck so far as cover was concerned; shooting from behind a tree, concealed in a bush, trying to remain hidden behind a stone or a fold in the earth, or rushing on over the open country.

Thus some of the units penetrated inland to the extent of several miles, while others were held back within a mile of the shore. Despite the fact that we were outnumbered by many thousands, ours was the day, ours was the victory. Seldom retreating, often advancing, we made our progress, roused with cheers—oh! such lusty cheers from strong and gallant men, resounding from hill-top to hill-top as some new im-



portant point was gained. Heavens! how those cheers stirred the heart, and put fresh life into the dirty, dishevelled, torn, and weary soldiers fighting for a secure foothold on those foreign ranges.

The warships in the bay kept pounding away at the Turkish defences and gun positions throughout the day, lending moral support as well as practical, in reminding us with their heavy bombardment that we had them at our back, and letting the enemy know there was something more than a handful of men to deal with. Guns on land we had none—except the Gurkhas' little mountain guns, with which they did excellent service. It was late in the day before the first 18-pounder was drawn up the slopes by a team of men, and the boys that saw it let their relieved feelings go in shouting and cooeing to this new big brother-in-arms come to help them.

This day's work was the Australian's baptism of fire—their initiation into the gruesome horrors of war, the gospel of which is destruction.

The morning had gone—the afternoon wore on. The day seemed short indeed, so busy was it. Down to the beach went the wounded, some being carried on stretchers, some on a comrade's back, others hobbling down using a rifle as a crutch, and some crawling down on all fours, or even dragging themselves along flat on their bodies—a pitiful sight. And lying on the hills were the dead—of the best of Australia's sons. As evening closed in the rifle and machine-gun fire, the blazing artillery and naval guns, though not ceasing, quietened down. The keener alertness was needed to watch for the creeping foe who were intent on driving us back into the sea, whence we had come. Firing at Turkish patrols, discovering enemy outposts, repulsing an attack or two, and the night deepened.

As midnight approached there were a few paces behind the line a couple of soldiers lying down, quietly scooping the earth away with their entrenching tools! A shallow hole was thus obtained, and they paid their last respects to their pal, whom they lifted into the place they had made, and covered him with earth, and gently placed a few wild, white daisies, stained with



his blood, on the freshly turned earth above him. Fastening the scabbard across his beyonet, they traced his name in pencil on the leather, as well as they could in the darkness; then plunged the steel point into the earth at the head of the grave.

They had done all they could.

So passed the first day at Anzac.





## THE BATTLE OF POZIERES.

Pozieres—just a name—the name of a village in France. But heavens! what an ocean of thought—what a sea of memories, what a quickening of the pulse, what a proud beating of the heart, and aye—what a flood of tears the simple mention of the name means to those who know its history; to those who have seen it as it was, and as it now is; who have seen the high brought down to the low; the beautiful made hideous; the rich made poor; the cared-for made fatherless and homeless; seen the town, once proud and lovely, writhing like a tortured soul in agony, in the chaos of its own debris.

Situated on a long low hill in the district of the Somme in Northern France, surrounded by great rolling plains of growing wealth, used to be the town of Pozieres. Blessed with an annual average rainfall of thirty-three inches, and, for the most part, very fertile soil, and a very industrious people, Pozieres grew up to be a very beautiful town in a prosperous district. The land in its vicinity was amongst the best-cultivated in France. The people grew beetroot for sugar, cereals, chiefly wheat; fodder and mangel wurzels; flax, hemp, and potatoes. Stock-raising to some degree was carried on—chiefly horses of the Norman breed. Some distance away, too, there was mined an important mineral product—phosphate of lime. Pozieres belongs to the “academie” (educational circumscription) of Lille, and is part of the Diocese of Amiens.

Once merely one of many hundreds of similar villages of France, unknown to the world at large, but now sprung into foremost importance, and known worldwide, the name spoken on every tongue—the fame won, alas! too dearly.

There was a time during the Great War when, in front of Pozieres, there stretched a strong line of Hun trenches, a system so well-devised, so splendidly en-



gineered, so safe, its underground works so shell-proof and even comfortable and home-like that, in looking over them later on, one wondered that those Bosches were ever driven out of them; and incidentally one glowed with pride that our own kith and kin had made so grand a "coup." Behind this line lay the snug village of Pozieres, and picturesque woods such as can only be found in France. But for this state of affairs to remain meant, for us, defeat—an unaccomplished task. So, on a given day, that comparatively peaceful part of the line, at once became a living hell. So great was the stirring that it shook the Huns right out of their defences, and sent them scattering across the fields in wild retreat—those that were left to do so.

Pozieres—the Battle of Pozieres. The first great battle of its kind in which the Australians had ever participated. We had, against deadly odds, landed in a foreign enemy country and fought a great battle there. We had endured to the utmost limit the hardships and horrors of trench and open warfare—but this great fight was something new—it was so immense. Our landing on Gallipoli had been effected with merely the aid of a few warships in the Bay of Saros, and no guns on land, and no enemy positions known. This advance in France was to be made with the assistance of hundreds of guns of all calibres—a gun to each yard of the "push." The Battle of Pozieres was fought in the middle of summer, 1916, and one outstanding feature of the whole affair was the way in which our men went into the fray. Favoured with glorious sunny weather, camping in old woods and orchards at nights, where the fresh bedewed scent of Nature lulled us to sleep, and the birds calling to their mates awoke us in the early mornings; marching through cool shady lanes by day, or through soft, green, grass-covered meadows, and across gorgeously bedecked fields of red poppies, blue cornflowers, yellow buttercups, spread out like a huge Turkish carpet of all the colours imaginable, bordered by hedges of white flowering hawthorne; each regiment bedecked itself with flowers of the fields to correspond with their regimental colours, the soldiers lustily singing to the time of their long easy strides as they marched, resembling a procession of happy people going



to a fair, rather than soldiers going to one of the biggest and most hellish battles ever fought in the great war. And this care-free, courageous spirit marked the Australian soldiers' behaviour throughout the war. From the distant rumbling sound of battle we once more came into the chaos and clamorous turmoil of the barrage that was playing the overture prior to our advance on to Pozieres. One constant rattle and roar and bursting of explosives. The black night turned into a lurid glare of a thousand lights of all colours—red lights, white lights, yellow lights, green lights; flashes of gun-fire, and fire of bursting shells; the leaping flames of incendiary projectiles, and, to crown everything, the whole battlefield lit up with the enormous, widespread, growing light given by a land-mine bursting, as a new huge crater was formed, and scores of lives hurled into eternity. And a mixture of banging and bursting caused obviously 18-pounders, the roaring crash of 15-in. howitzers, the elastic rip of naval guns now mounted on land, the straining roar, the hiss and moaning, the blood-curdling shrieks, the vengeance-full sounds of shells hurling through the air on their deadly mission. We passed those superb defences of the enemy's, and they were a mass of ruins. The mighty had indeed fallen—their superb system of underground habitation, down as far as fifty and seventy feet, the timbered walls papered and bedecked with hangings and tapestries probably stolen from the altars of the churches of Pozieres; bath-heaters and well-equipped workshops; electric light, bedsteads and spring mattresses, wardrobes and mirrors—even women's clothing was found there. No wonder the occupants had to be bombed and bayoneted out of their quarters. But to gain Pozieres was not to be an easy matter, for was this place not a very important one from a strategical point of view? It had to be fought for—noble lives had to be lost, horrors of a legion hells had to be gone through, and now between the Australians and the village of Pozieres the enemy laid down a magnificent barrage. What an ominous curtain of fire that seemed to those who had to pass through it. Approaching it, it seemed like a solid wall of smoke and fire that was impenetrable. Thickly along a given line the shells, high explosive percussion bursting on the ground, and



high explosive shrapnel bursting in the air continuously; and the flashes and the smoke, ascending from the one and descending from the other, met and built themselves into one long, high, thick wall of living hell and flying fragments. And it seemed as though across this wall there were implanted the words that appeared over another imaginative hell—"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here—it is Death." Through this damned wall we had to go. And when we think of these things as the past, we marvel and we wonder that it was possible for any to go through unscathed, unmolested by the growling, treacherous dogs of battle, not fettered by the keeper of Death's portal. Through this fire the Australians went, and captured Pozieres from the hands of the Hun. When I heard we were actually in the village I asked "But where is Pozieres?" "at present" I was informed, "we are in its main street." Pozieres! alas! we were in a trench at the time—dug down along the main thoroughfare of the town, with all the ghastly results of battle around. I looked, and saw here and there a small heap of stones and wreckage—all that was left of Pozieres, hardly one stone left on top of another, the town rased to the ground, battered down, crumpled and torn, rebattered and churned up into a mighty chaos a thousand times over by the ceaseless bombardment of cannon. The woods in the vicinity—where were they? One or two bare trunks of trees still standing—everything else shattered and mown down by the terrible sword of Mars. Where once was a flourishing town is now a scattered, buried, shattered mass of chaos. Where once was industry and cheerful waving crops waiting the harvest is now a barren, shell-ridden area. Where once were woods with beautifully patterned lovers walks, is now a scarred battered scene of desolation. The once nurtured and happy inhabitants—those who could—have gone forth homeless, comfortless.



## THE SOMME MUD.

We stood and watched the last of the battalion coming out. But it was a sorry-looking, bedraggled, torn, grimy, famished set of men that came from the trenches that night. The wonder is that they weren't all dead with some pulmonary disease, but, as it was, there were but few who were really ill; some others could hardly hobble along, bootless as they were, for their feet had swollen to such a size that it was impossible to have boots on. Others had thrown themselves down on the firmer ground out "on top," utterly exhausted, to sleep until morning, scorning bullet and shell and bomb. The guns were booming out their death-knell. German shells were bursting, some amongst the boys, others near them. Crash! crash! crash! cr-r-r-u-u-mp!! Presently, straggling a long way behind the others, alone, came one poor fellow, blundering along through the heavy mud, weary, his heart pounding like the guns that were firing so rapidly, his limbs aching, his temples throbbing, his eyes blinded by the sweat which poured from his forehead. He had long since lost all sight or sound of his comrades in the pitch darkness. They had not seen him fall into the deep shell crater away back, and while he had struggled to extricate himself from his perilous position, they had gone on, leaving him alone. Only the two men who had been behind him had seen him fall, and, but for them, he would never had got out of that slough. They had since both been killed by a shell which burst between them. And this man was now trudging on alone, hoping he was going in the right direction. He stopped a moment to wipe the sweat from his eyes with his sleeve. Ugh! it brought a dirty, cold slime to his face instead. Of course—hadn't he fallen into that shell crater, which was full of slimy mud, and been covered from head to foot by it, and been almost smothered as well? He shivered at the recollection, and an exclamation of disgust escaped him. Then on again—slush! slush! slush! along the sunken road he came, struggling, floundering, bogging, fall-



ing, through the knee-deep mud. He stopped to rest awhile, then on again, but into deeper mud. It was his last feeble effort—he was done. He floundered and fell, sinking deeper and deeper into the damned mud, his voice crying out: "I'm done. I'm done to the wide! I've tried me best, but I can't—go—no further!"

And there he would have sank and smothered, buried alive by the deep mud, to be trampled under foot, no one knowing he was there, not even a cross to mark his whereabouts, had it not chanced that someone was there to see and aid him. He was in the same plight as many good soldiers had been during those past few weeks, the same plight as many others who had worked, who had suffered, who had endured, to the last limit, the terrors of the MUD, in winter, on the Somme.





## **THE BATTLE OF BROODSEINDE RIDGE.**

**OCTOBER 4th, 1917.**

Crash! Crash! Crash! Crash! The throbbing, humming Bosche aeroplanes which had been hovering overhead had at last dropped its menacing load on the ridge just to the rear of where we were now trudging through the heavy, sloppy marsh in the darkness. In quick succession, with an awful elastic roar, each incendiary bomb exploded, a great sheet of flame pouring from each, leaving a glow from the burning mass akin to the light of day, illuminating all the country round about, showing up with disgusting wantonness the piled-up mess and tangle and wreckage of dead horses, dead mules, dead men, smashed or overturned waggons and motor lorries, wheels, engines, ammunition and food supplies, all intermingled in the broken chaos of destruction.

The men looked at the smoking fumes of the burning glare behind, thankful that the bombs had not dropped in their midst; they looked—just a glance—at the hateful scene on either side of them, and quickened their pace somewhat, not through fear, but discretion; this was evidently a spot where enemy shells played high havoc night and day, and, not wishing to become part of that rotting heap of debris, and having a great programme to carry out, they made their way past this place as quickly as they could. They had come around lakes which once had been picturesque, where happy people had once spent happy days in pleasure boats, surrounded by woods where only whispering tree tops had talked in secret of those who had walked there. But now instead of the slash of oars, there was only the splash of an enemy shell occasionally dropping into the lake; instead of the woods, there were the fallen trees wrenched from the ground by their roots, broken off midway, only the grey dead trunks still standing, great forest fallen by a mightier force than ever woodman's axe had been; instead of pretty lovers' walks a few scattered duck-boards stretched across the gaping



shell holes, to mark the way the soldier must take to reach the line. Such was our route around the Zillebeke lakes, up the Helles Track, and on to Westhoeck Ridge. The land of deep German dug-outs was well past. There remained now only the "open road," with hardly even a sap or trench, which meant open fighting, taking your chance for shelter, when in need of it, in a shell hole, unless a kindly "pill-box"—a small solid concrete construction erected, but very sparsely, one or two to every mile, by the Germans—happened to be in your part of the sector, and had room for you. Lucky for you if it was so, for the shelling was mighty close and solid. At Westhoeck Ridge we stopped a night, and Providence supplied us with a "pill-box," where we could study our maps, and discuss the situation, and make improvements on old ideas, and make fresh plans for the coming offensive.

About an hour after midnight on the following night we were assembled on Westhoeck Ridge, and began our journey up to the rendezvous at Zonnebeke, to the tape-line, from where we were to begin our advance onto the Germans at dawn. Now we were within the range of machine guns, those gunners whose places we reckoned so soon to take, were sweeping the country with their torrents of bullets, which were singing through the air just above our heads, or dropping near our feet, so close. Ah! so close! Now a shell would burst, but fifty yards from the string of men just ahead. Peste! one of those new wide-spreading shells, "Daisy Cutter." See those red-hot glowing masses of steel spurt from the bursting flame close along the ground, and—yes! there had been several hit. Hit! Would 'twere but a mere hit! A mass of men lying scattered on the ground—legs and arms severed, bodies and heads mutilated, others dead, some dying, some few who were luckier with but slighter wounds. Curse those shells—why can't they stop? Go on, you men, or you'll get hit! All we can do is to hurriedly bandage them up and lay them all together on the ground or in a shell-hole if there be one near—and leave them. We shudder at the thought of leaving them there alone—but what can we do? "C'est la guerre." Stretcher bearers will find them when their turn comes. Now we must hurry to



catch up our battalion, which has gone a long way on while we have been thus delayed.

At last, after long, weary tramping, and many delays, we arrive at the starting point, just behind our then present front line, and the battalion deposits itself into the many shell-holes or some groups of men begin digging a shelter for themselves, keeping low so that they will not be seen when the enemy flares go up; keeping silent so that the enemy will not hear them. Occasional shells are falling, bullets are playing all along the line; occasionally we must take a little trip somewhere along the line to see to some wounded men. Presently the Germans sent over a light bombardment, like the preliminary bombardment that sometimes is the forerunner of a real one. Thus it turned out to be. Some time after this lumbering of falling shells had been going on the German guns opened up to their full limit, belching forth one constant bellowing rush of shells, which formed a massive curtain of blasting, bursting Hellish Fury of high explosive and shrapnel, just to the rear of our then front line, thus we were caught in the barrage. Here we were, unsheltered, laying out in the open shell-holes, caught like rats in a trap in the intensity of the German barrage. And here we had to stay—Hell though it was—expecting Death at every moment, the shells falling so close and numerous that it seemed that every yard of that ground must be churned up, excepting that on which we lay. Just one clamour and rush and pandemonium of bursting shells. Constantly pieces of earth and bits of spent shell coming with a thwack onto our legs, or bodies, merely causing a bruise or a “clink” as a piece struck our steel helmets. Someone wriggled on your right; it was useless to ask if he was hit—we couldn’t hear each other shout, the din was so noisy, so we’d merely bend over and look hard—it was now starlight enough to see; he would sign that all was well. Then have a look if the others were alright. Yes, they seemed alright, though this sudden and prolonged intensity of horror seemed to have paralysed their nerves and turned them into cold, still, white statues. Then we’d begin to wonder when our turn was coming. A crash nigh bursting our eardrums, and part of the lip of our shell hole disappeared



just at my head, then the flopping down of debris on top of us, and there was a fresh shell hole linked up with ours. This occurred all round us. Gruesome enough, our shell hole being thus gradually picked away all around, as the shells, coming so close, making new craters. It seemed impossible that we should be passed over uninjured. We began to work it out in imagination—one had burst there—one there—one there, and so on. Yes, it must be the turn for this spot at any moment now. Will the shrapnel get us before a high explosive comes? How will it affect us? And we ran all the different wounds through our imagination—severed limbs, severed heads, bodies smashed to pulp, or torn limb from limb. Which would ours be? Oh! it was wretched—and there was no escape, and for three-quarters of an hour we had to lay there in that barrage, and bear that torture. But after some time a greater calm seemed to come over our minds—a kind of restful peace, evidently the utter exhaustion of our nerves. But whether it was the fast belief that we would not be destroyed or whether it was merely a quiet resignation to the inevitable, to the ever-nearing, approaching death, I know not.

Why the Germans had put over this heavy barrage, we knew not at the time, but the only feasible explanation we could think of was that they knew we were there, that the secret of our coming attack had leaked out. Our coming attack! It seemed now a shattered dream—an impossible success; surely but few would still be living when the signal to advance would come—too few for the waiting Germans, who would either slaughter or take as prisoners what remained of our shattered regiments as we approached them. Horrible sights and sounds there were all round. If there ever was a mere moment when the quietening of the din allowed you to hear sounds other than the crashing of shells, it would be filled with the cries and groans of the wounded men. Just a short distance away, an incendiary shell would burst, right amongst a crowd of men. Up the flames would shoot, and in the lurid glare there moved the rocking forms of men. They'd rise but to fall again; some would move, crouched, first one way and then another way, yet never out of that widespread



flame, not knowing what way to go, blinded and stifled by the flames, then would fall, a burning heap of human flesh.

At length, suddenly something snapped, the tension on the nerves was released, we started up and listened with eager smiles on our faces, as though we'd been wakened from some awful nightmare by the strains of Heaven's own sweetest music. It was OUR barrage. Like the cooling stream is to the thirsty heat-blistered traveller, like the sight of the oasis is to the weary wanderer on the stifling desert, like the dawn of a fresh, clear day, is to him who is lost and freezing on a damp, dark night; like a lull in the fiercest storm is to the frightened child, so the opening up of our guns hitherto silent was to us. Intense as the German barrage was, it was, after all, as a child's play compared with ours. And we were there in the best possible position to judge—midway between both sides of artillery, we could ascertain which was the fiercer. When ours began we could hear no more of the enemy's—such was its intensity; such a wild roll of drums from a thousand drummers you would never hear. It was our drum-fire at its best.

Then came the relief of movement. We got up and went forward over our own front line, over towards the Germans. It was dawn, and fast growing towards the full light of day, and it was surprising to discover that so many of our men were still left after such a heavy bombardment. Like ants swarming about when their ant-bed has been disturbed, did our men keep coming out from everywhere—out of their shell holes. It was a happy diversion this, for out there in what was formerly "No Man's Land" we had advanced beyond the German barrage, and whilst we waited for our own first line of barrage to lift from the German front line, we busied ourselves going from shell hole to shell hole, binding the wounded and making them more comfortable. Our front-line barrage then lifted, and forward we went. And what did we find? Germans massed for attack—laying out in "No Man's Land" in front of their trenches awaiting their signal to advance on us. We had beaten them only by three minutes—that is the great joke of that morning's attack. Imagine their



surprise, in waiting for the correct minute to advance on us, to find themselves attacked instead. Then there was a commotion—but our lads had the upper hand. A few Germans resisted our attack, some fled, others came running excitedly towards us, their hands upraised in surrender; some of them holding out their watches and rings as barter for their lives, completely demoralised. The officer commanding the German attack was captured, and his plans obtained. Westhoeck Ridge was to have been his second objective. He reached his objective alright, and further, but not as a conqueror. It was surprising to see the number of officers we took—fine stamp of soldiers, too, most of them, and very dignified. Men who had no fear of death, and would sooner suffer death than an indignity. One officer lay wounded on a stretcher, and, wishing to make him more comfortable, one of our men went to place a couple of sand bags under his head. Seeing some mud on the bags, the Hun snatched the bags and threw them into the attendant's face. A revolver was immediately drawn and levelled at the German's head. With a smile, half cynical, half hatred, on his face, he leisurely folded his arms and said: "Do your worst." Yet there were his opposites—in one case a captain, wounded, but not severely, was begging to be carried away immediately, and he would tell us everything—give us good information—betray his country. In part there were a finer stamp of Prussian Guards who would not give place to our men—who fought hard to the finish. But ours was the victory—we gained all our objectives. Thus the foe, who intended taking Westhoeck Ridge, were sent scattering pell-mell into the plains below, like leaves disturbed by the equinox, while we advanced on them and captured their positions. The German artillery, for about half an hour, were dumfounded—they knew not what to do. One German officer sitting waiting in his pill-box, expecting any minute to receive news of their men having gained their first objective, was suddenly surprised by a bomb being thrown in the place, and the Australian command to "Come out!" The German artillerymen, in the early morning light, could not discern at first whether our advancing hosts were their own men retreating, or whether we were prisoners in their hands being sent to the rear. Our



artillery, also, had sent them a bombardment of gas-shells, which had shut most of them up for a while. As one major of German artillery said: "We were pounding away, having it all our own way, and then your artillery opened up, and—it was all terrible." Thus for about half an hour we advanced without a man being able to consolidate their position again, they opened up a continuous bombardment onto us which seemed to be never-ending. The ground seemed to be bumping up and down, swaying to and fro, with the force of the ceaseless bursting high explosives. Casualties were very numerous under that murderous fire. I think I can safely say that that day was the most solid and most consistent bombardment I've ever worked through. So heavy was it, that it was impossible for stretcher-bearers to come up to us from the dressing station at the rear; as quickly as they tried to reach us they would be wiped out with shell fire, so that we had to store all our wounded in the "pill-boxes," in the shell holes—anywhere—all that day and the following night. And it was pitiful to see those men there, bearing up bravely with their wounds, waiting, waiting patiently for stretcher-bearers who could not come. Slowly but surely we could see the life fading from some among them, yet we could do nothing, only give them a sip of water from our scanty supply, now and then. The following morning they knew the secret of the Great Beyond, and we had to carry them out into the shell holes, in no need of any further help. At length, the following day, with the dying down of the bombardment, came the stretcher-bearers, and we could get the wounded cleared away—first those out in the shell holes, then those in shelter, and the field was clear. The barrages died down to their normal state, lasting no more than two hours at a time, then quietness for a couple of hours. In the meantime the Germans had tried a counter-attack, but without success. Their dead lay over a thousand in front of our parapets; our artillery caught Prussia's best massing for attack in a wood, and encircled them with a barrage, gradually closing on them, drawing the circle in smaller and smaller, so that they had them hemmed in tightly together, escape impossible; then they were merely annihilated.



A wholesale slaughter is this modern warfare—just sitting tight, holding on, waiting for YOUR shell to come. Each man thinks every moment his is coming—yet here we are—out of it safe and sound, unscarred from the Hell that we've been through.

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### WHAT HE DREADED.

It was the first day on Gallipoli—a stretcher-bearer was studying the tall form of General Bridges, who was standing fully erect on the top of a ridge, coolly viewing the course of the battle through his field glasses.

"I say," said the Bearer, "you'd better sit down, General." There was no response. "You blanky old fool," shouted the Bearer, vexed at the General's indifference, "lie down, or you'll get hit!"

"All right, my lad; it's all right," the General then said, slightly irritated.

"But it's not all right!" roared the Bearer, "I tell you you might get hit!"

"Well, If I am sonny," the General argued good humouredly with this soldier who evidently had his leader's safety so much at heart, "If I am hit, I may be only wounded."

"That's the worst of it," blurted out the stretcher-bearer, "if ye'd be killed it'd be all right—an' end to it. But if ye're only wounded, I'm thinkin' you look too blanky awkward and heavy for me to lug down to the Beach. That's what I'm thinkin' of!"

The General immediately lay down, and studied the field from the prone position.





## THE DEATH RAT.

Near Guidecourt in 1917, a Tommy regiment was occupying a camp lately deserted by Fritz. This regiment had for a mascot a rat-terrier. One of the officers one day spotted a rat in the camp, and gave chase with "Jingo," the terrier. The rat led the way into an old communication trench, with "Jingo" hot on his dirty heels ; but before the dog could get a dinkum bite at the rodent, it disappeared down a small hole.

The officer scratched his head while the still hopeful "Jingo" scratched at the hole. Then he got a brain-wave. A little benzine from a passing lorry, and a match, and . . .

Both were quickly obtained, with the help of a five-franc note. The dog was pulled away from his excavations, the benzine was poured down the hole, with a lighted match following the highly inflammable stuff, and—that was the end of "Jingo," the officer, and two hundred and fifty soldiers. Besides, there were many wounded, and the immense crater is still probably there to tell the tale of the German mine to which that little hole led.

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Up at the Bluff in the Ypre salient a Digger, while seated in a trench, was fooling about with his rifle and shot his pal through the leg. Next day, almost at the same time, while the careless Biljim was with a fatigue party a short distance behind the line, a Hun sniper got him in practically the same spot as he had plugged his mate. Both came home with right legs amputated just below the knee.





JULIA-and Plan of the field  
of her Wonderful scheme.



## THE STRANGE WOOING OF JULIA.

Cerise Farm in Flanders presented a picture of rest and contentment. The dairy cows were standing under the giant apple and pear trees, eating the fallen fruit, or picking at will from the lower branches, or lying in the sun, lazily chewing over the cud. A carpet of soft green grass spread over the ground—the sky was azure blue, dotted with a few soft white clouds which moved along the roadside, then the hedges to trim and the over- from the house, with a bucket, and milked the domesticated cows just wherever they happened to be.

The house was a shelter for a number of refugees who, in the first days of the Great War, had flown from the north from Belgium, before the hurricane of war swept hither. And here they worked, women and children, young girls and old men, from 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the harvest, for two francs a day, and their keep deducted from that. Long hours and small pay, but it was at least a living, though the food was scant and poor. There was much to do at the harvest time. First the hay to gather, then the beans to harvest, then the lucerne to cut and garner; then the tobacco bush which grew along the canals, to be cut and put out to dry for tobacco. Then the servants had to collect the bracken along the roadside, then the hedges to trim and the overgrowth to be cut from the drains. All these things had to be in turn stacked, and then gathered in.

The farm, as were all farms in Flanders at that time, was, apart from the civilian population, a busy hive of khaki-clad soldiers, who camped in the barns, the stables, or more fortunate ones in the house, wherever there was shelter. On this particular evening Billzac, a captain of the Australian Forces, was visiting a brother officer at Cerise Farm and incidentally enjoying a cool bottle



of cobweb "Bock," when his attention was arrested by the figure of a young woman making her way alone from the field. At the moat, she took off her wooden clogs and stockings, and washed and cooled her ankles and feet, which, thought Billzac, were rather daintily shaped for that part of the world. Having partially dried them with some tufts of green grass, she was proceeding to put on her clogs again, when an over-ardent and slightly tipsy soldier walked out to her, and, embracing her, tried to kiss her. She wheeled around, her eyes blazing fire, and caught him a smashing blow on the face with her clog she held. He reeled slightly, but, recovering, said: "You lovely little spitfire; I'm determined now to have a kiss for that blow," and seized her arms. By this time Billzac, who had rushed out, was up to them, and got hold of the aggressor, and threw him to the ground. "Jones," he called, "I'm terribly sorry to have to interfere with your courting, but I understand the lady objects to your attentions."

The digger slouched away, apologising, and feeling rather a big goat. The girl stood a moment, her face flushed, her wonderful big eyes looking at Billzac, a world of surprise and gratefulness in them, a glory of golden hair, shining in the shafts of the westering sun, crowning all.

"Merci, Monsieur," was all she said, then, blushing, she fled as fast as her legs could carry her inside the house.

"Who is she?" asked Billzac of his friend.

"Julia is her name—a refugee who lives at this farm, and works in the fields, and lives on a crust of bread, a hunk of fat, a mug of red wine, the same as the rest of them."

"Good Lord! What a life for such a girl!"

"Just as you say—but I'm glad you like her without thinking her harm."

"Like her?" and Billzac went over to where his horse was tethered, mumbling something about "Julia."

"Say!" he called, before mounting, "has this Julia any admirers?"

"Great Scott, man! Do you think anybody could look at her and not admire her?"



"You chump!" chided Billzac. "I mean—has she any obvious intentions on anyone in particular?"

"You have just witnessed a very typical result of all the wooing Julia does."

"But among the civilian population, or anyone up north?"

But beyond a shrug of the shoulders and a "le bon Dieu only knows," Billzac could glean no further information.

"Then," said Billzac, "if you don't mind, I'm going to court Madamosielle Julia—I must at least speak to her."

"What are your intentions, Billzac?"

"Honourable, I assure you."

"Then blaze away, and good luck to you. If I hadn't a wife who goes one better, I'd see you in blazes before I'd let you have your way. But any Tommyrot, Billzac, and you'll have me to deal with."

"You'll never have cause to lay your maulers on me, old son," and he rode away. During the days following Billzac had a very one-sided courtship with Julia. The first day of his wooing was a Sunday afternoon. Mesdames and demoiselles and old messieurs, the only men who were left, had all been to "L'église," and in the afternoon visitors were abroad; some of the young "garçons," as yet too young for the firing line, had each a stem of a rose stuck in his mouth, and made eyes at Elise and Marcelle, the elder men in their shiny, peaked caps and only "best suit," the women in their best frocks. A babel of tongues was going on inside the house of refugees from various quarters, so Billzac and his pal had sought a seat beneath a pear tree in the orchard, but principally because, lying on the grass fifty yards away, with several other girls, was Julia, a veritable burst of radiance amongst the other coarser type of girls. Billzac was sighing his life away. Only once when he had looked towards the group had he seen Julia observing him with big wide-open eyes, but immediately she had become conscious that his gaze was directed to her, she had looked down, and began nervously plucking blades of grass with her fingers. And for the life of him, Billzac could not muster up courage to go and speak to her. On Monday morning he beheld



as she went to the fields with the others, after breakfast; and though she had looked him fully in the face, she again turned her gaze away, her face slightly flushed. In the evening he was in a motor-car when he passed her on the road, and yet he could not speak to her. He told the driver to offer her a ride, but she promptly refused to take the lift. But those big lovely eyes of hers which Billzac caught looking at him at they passed her, haunted him. He decided finally to open up his courtship with a box of chocolates—all girls liked chocolates—she would be pleased. Next morning he sent a big box of them to her by "le facteur." The postman found her in the field working with the others, and Billzac, who wanted to see those eyes of hers grow bigger with delight and surprise, had ridden up just as the postman had delivered the parcel. Julia was the object of much sarcasm and jest when she opened the packet, and, on reading who it was from, she swore, and threw the box of sweets far away into the hedge. But she threatened to tackle with her hoe, a lad who went to run after them. Billzac decided instantly to ride home. He was, he argued, very unaccomplished in the art of winning a girl's affection. That evening, after dusk, on his way down to Cerise Farm, he discovered Julia, sitting crouched in the hedge, the box of chocolates on her lap, devouring them greedily.

"Ah, Mademoiselle Julia," said Billzac, "so you could not resist hunting up the box you threw away this morning."

"Monsieur," said Julia, startled, "Why did you make such a fool of me this morning? The talk of the farm and all the neighbourhood now is of Julia and her beau who sends her chocolates."

"Any harm in that?"

"Only that it puts me in a false position—never send me more."

"But you are enjoying them—I'll give them to you privately. I could meet you every evening like this wherever you like."

"No! I forbid it." She explained that she was grateful for his protection and his favours, but beyond that—a flat refusal for any special privileges. No—she would not let him take her to the cinema—his own



fellow-soldiers and her friends would misinterpret his intentions. She greedily ate another half dozen chocolates, saying it was a long time since she had been able to taste the like. Then she made him take the box, telling him to hide it, that, moreover, he must not bring her more.

Often, after that, he spoke to her when opportunity offered, but never for long—she did not appear inclined to encourage conversation. One day he brought her a large bunch of black Bailleul grapes, large and luscious. She looked longingly at them, but abruptly said—“M’sieur, why do you bring me these things when I have forbidden it? I will not accept them—take them away. If I ate them I am under an obligation to you. I prefer to be independent—‘comprenez vous?’”

“Then, Julia—I’m going to ask you a question. From the first moment I ever saw you, I fell in love with you——”

“M’sieur,” flared Julia indignantly.

“It’s true as God, Julia, and my intentions towards you are honourable. Soon I might have to go away again. Can I not try and win your affection while I am able?”

“M’sieur, I have great affection for you—because you are good and liberal and kind to me. But beyond that—it is impossible, M’sieur.”

“There’s only one thing, then, that will stop me from trying to win your deeper affection—is there anyone else who has a greater right to you than I have—anybody you’ve set your heart on?”

“No-o-o—But yes—M’sieur, yes—yes.”

“Julia, you are lying.”

No, before God I swear! I first wanted to tell lies, but it is true—I am sworn to one soldier Belgian who fights at the front.”

Billzac bowed and rode away. When he looked back, but once he saw a beautiful face, eyes wide-open—from which there appeared to be tears flowing—looking towards him. She was evidently sorry for him. He did not go back.

The last sheaf, decked with blue cornflower, white hawthorne, and red poppies, a gay representation of the tricolour of France was snugly placed to crown the last



stack of hay brought in from the fields. The work-girls and the lads all chimed up with "Vive la France! Hurrah! Vive la tricolore! Hurrah!" and then the crash came. A dirty huge black cloud of smoke and earth, accompanied by a deafening, cruel crash, hurled into space from the field in which they were working.

"Oh!" cried the girls, when they'd recovered their breath. A murmur of dissent and questioning came from the lads. A French Official just then arrived with the news that a big German advance had already begun, that the line of defence was falling back, the district was in imminent danger, and that therefore all civilians were ordered to evacuate the area. Another crash, as a shrapnel shell burst nearer the homestead, sent them all flying as they were, hatless, without coat or blanket, without food or water, away back on the road that would lead them eventually through Amiens. For they were afraid, with good reason, to go near the steading where the shrapnel now burst freely. All except Julia, who gathered her clogs up, one in each hand, and ran in her stockinged feet for the farm of Monsieur Croquet, which lay a few hundred yards to the West of Cerise Farm. There Billzac was quartered. Arriving there, she sought out the man she wanted from the group who were watching the shelling (as yet it had not affected Croquet's Farm) which was becoming more constant, and breathlessly she told him: "Monsieur—the Germans—they come!"

"I know, little one, and we are just waiting orders for action. But you, Julia, you must run as fast as your pretty feet will carry you towards Amiens, or the Bosches will have you, and I may not be able to defend you."

"But you, monsieur —"

"Why all this worry about me all of a sudden, petite?"

"Nothing, Monsieur, but give me a rifle and ammunition and I shall stay wit' you and shoot "les Allemands."

Someone called for Billzac.

"No! No! There's orders for me now—go Julia, and a safe journey."



He hurried in to take his orders. Coming out again some time later, he found Julia still in the courtyard.

"Not gone yet, Julia? I'll have to force you now—"

"Where you go Billzac?"

"Cerise Farm will be my headquarters—my Company will dig in along there as a stronghold to stop the German advance. Now go!"

"Then promise me—camp in the wine cellar."

"You want me to get drunk?"

"Promise me—it is all I ask—it is the best place. If the Germans overwhelm you, at the north of it there is a trap door through the floor which leads to a tunnel which, if you bear to the left turnings, will take you South safely." Giving him other instructions, she drew from him the promise that, failing to find a more suitable place for his headquarters, he would make use of her advice. Then they each went their way. Billzac found, on reconnoitering Cerise Farm, that, from a safety point of view, pending the actual attack which was ever drawing nearer, the wine cellar was the best place for his headquarters, also for the time being to shelter the greater part of his Company from the incessant shell-fire. So there he had his batman lay his bed of straw, taken from the lately garnered stacks. This was safer than sleeping in a bed in the house. When he was satisfied that the men had dug an adequate defence position, he retired to the cellar to sleep for the rest of the night, or until such time as duty required him to be about again.

Alas for that night! The Bosche aeroplanes came over and emptied their deadly cargoes onto the farms in that neighbourhood. It is true not many actual buildings were struck, but one bomb fell on Cerise Farm and completely shattered the whole building. That, and the barrage of German artillery fire that followed, caused many casualties and left our line very weak. Many soldiers were buried alive in the mass of debris of fallen masonry, and search as they would, no trace could be found of Billzac, but a futile attempt was being made to excavate the entrance to the wine cellar, where it was hoped that he and a number of others were merely imprisoned.



The bomb had shattered the whole of the cellar, excepting one end where Billzac and another officer lay. Here only a shaft of timber had given way, which, however, pinned Billzac mercilessly across his legs to the floor, and had killed the other sleeper near him, they being the only two left unburied. After waiting what seemed an eternity in that dark chamber of horror, there was eventually a banging below the floor near where he lay, and then he felt a draught of air as though a door had been opened.

"Billzac" called a voice.

"I am here," replied Billzac, "but I can't move."  
"Merci a le bon Dieu!" it was Julia.

"Julia!" cried Billzac, "How came you to be here? I thought you in Amiens by this time."

"No," she replied, "with you in danger here, I could not go. I stayed in a hiding place with a rifle and ammunition I stole to help you defend Cerise Farm, and then I saw the whole farm enveloped in flame from the bomb. I made enquiry—but you were missing—so I came by the secret passage which comes from Monsieur Croquet's farm to this cellar."

"You wonderful girl Julia—but you can't do anything for me I'm afraid—that damned beam across my legs has got all Cerise Farm resting on it, and you can't move that."

"Pauvre garçon," wept Julia, "but I get help quickly through the passage. Au revoir."

When Julia emerged at Monsieur Croquet's farm, she found everything in turmoil there. A terrific barrage had passed and enveloped the place, which was in ruins. Only by sheer luck had the opening of the tunnel been left uncovered. She paused a moment before that terrible Hell of bursting shell, while the ground rocked and swayed, as though from a violent earthquake, through the concussion of high explosive shells. Then, despite the danger to her life, with only Billzac's immediate recovery in her mind, she went out and raced about hither and thither, in search of the soldiers who had been there but fifteen minutes before. No trace could be found of them—only a number of mangled ruins of men. The place was deserted—where had they gone? There was only one wretched reply to her ques-



tion—it came from a wounded soldier asking for a drink of water. The barrage had proved too much for our men, and, to save life, they had retreated he knew not how far, after having got away all the wounded. At the beginning of the retreat he had become a casualty, and in the chaos and darkness they had missed him, and he had only a few minutes ago regained consciousness. Julia gave him a drink from the water bottle of a dead soldier. The water proved fatal to the lad's stomach wound, for he died in Julia's arms. With the passing of his life, a wonderful thing happened—the curtain of fire lifted, and the dawn began to break. Immediately Julia realised she held a corpse in her arms, she abandoned it, and began to run in a southern direction over the broken ground, another scheme in her mind, when she was suddenly overtaken by someone who jabbed something long and gleaming, in the first rays of daylight, at her. She avoided it by stumbling to the ground in her fright. Her aggressor, thus missing the objective he had put all his force into reaching, also blundered to the ground, but others were coming at her—German soldiers with their bayonets pointed at her. She screamed for mercy, and an "unter-officier" spoke a quick word of command, at which the soldiers went on, leaving Julia to be queried by the non-commissioned officer. Julia's brain worked quickly, but she could not immediately formulate a plan, except that she must not tell of Billzac's plight, for fear they either left him to die, or went and killed him. She did not for a moment believe that they would, in the hurry of the advance, go to the trouble the circumstances demand, to rescue Billzac. So, giving a few untruthful replies to her questioner, and subjecting herself to a search for arms, she was allowed, with a kick, to pass northwards as a prisoner of war. Arrived at the first Field Ambulance, she was detained, and made to assist in carrying stretcher cases and doing various jobs of an arduous nature which her strong, well-trained body easily withstood. Towards the end of the day, she hit on a plan. She wished to see the Officer commanding the Station—she had important secrets to give away. Granted the interview, the officer sent a messenger to a higher official, the reply to which resulted in Julia being sent



on the track towards the line under escort. The story she had concocted dealt with the fallacy that she knew of certain land mines which she herself had helped to prepare, and that she knew how to release the contrivance that was timed to explode the mines that night. This, she thought, would at least get her to the place where she wanted to be, and she had to trust to luck for the rest. According to her plan, having arrived at Monsieur Croquet's Farm, she was once more asked to give her information to the Officer in Command there. This completed,

"Good!" said the Officer, "I will send an officer with you who will blow your brains out if you are fooling us."

She swore she told the truth, and asked him to have his soldiers evacuated the chateau de la Comtesse d'Harlincourt as well, about a kilometre to the south, as there was also a mine there.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the officer; "excellent! You release the one at Cerise Farm, and don't bother your head about the one at the Comtesse's Chateau."

"Monsieur, it is not too late—the mine there has not exploded?"

"Got in Himmel, no! But I would like to see it explode, for we have not yet driven those British dogs out of there."

Julia almost laughed outright, but checking herself, said: "Oh, it is too horrible. I hope someone will stop it from exploding."

She then led her escort down the tunnel which led to Cerise Farm, according to instructions from the officer who held her arm and incidentally a revolver at her head, to release the mine machine which she had reported would blow up all that area. With only the gleam of an electric torch they went on, until the officer noticed a branch tunnel leading off to the left.

"Where does this lead to?" he asked.

"To Monsieur Buerre's Farm," lied Julia; "there is no mine there."

Now this tunnel along which they went, dug out during the old days of the Flemish wars, was the main tunnel connecting Monsieur Croquet's Farm with the Chateau of the Comtesse d'Harlincourt, travelling east



to within the vicinity of Cerise Farm, then curving off in a semi-circle to the chateau. Where they now stood was an arm of the tunnel dug out to connect up with the wine cellar of Cerise Farm, not to Monsieur Buerre's Farm, as Julia intimated, and her objective was into the hands of the British at the Chateau. So near was she now to the one she wished to aid, but not yet daring to go to him. A grunt from the officer, and they moved on. Presently he asked:

"How much further is it? It is stifling in this cursed tunnel."

"Soon you will have the fresh air," she assured him.

"How do you make that out?" he asked. "Is there then an opening at the other end?"

"Yes," she replied; "the mine is in a barn."

"Then," he demanded, "why did you not take us overland?"

"Because," she replied, "it is safer here—and I feared the shells."

Her explanation was taken with an extra jab of the revolver's muzzle at her head. They hurried on as fast as they could, the darkness and discomfort adding mystery to the situation, which aided in baffling her escort. Little they realised, on account of its gradual curve, that they were going south instead of east. At length Julia stopped. What should she do next? She had arrived at her objective. Formerly the Army Medical Corps had their headquarters at the Chateau, and kept their stores in the cellar, now just above them. She remembered the tube of oxygen they kept there, a breath of which one of the staff gave her one day as a jest. Were they still there? She ascended the three steps in front of them, and pushed hard against the trap door, which presently gave. She pushed it up and peered out—all was darkness. Evidently the cellar's inhabitants had moved, and, as the torchlight showed, in a hurry, for many of their stores, including the tube of oxygen, were still there. The pounding of the guns and the bursting of the shells was no louder than the beating of Julia's heart. At any rate, if the British were at the Chateau, they would be busy and watching up top outside. No time now to inhabit



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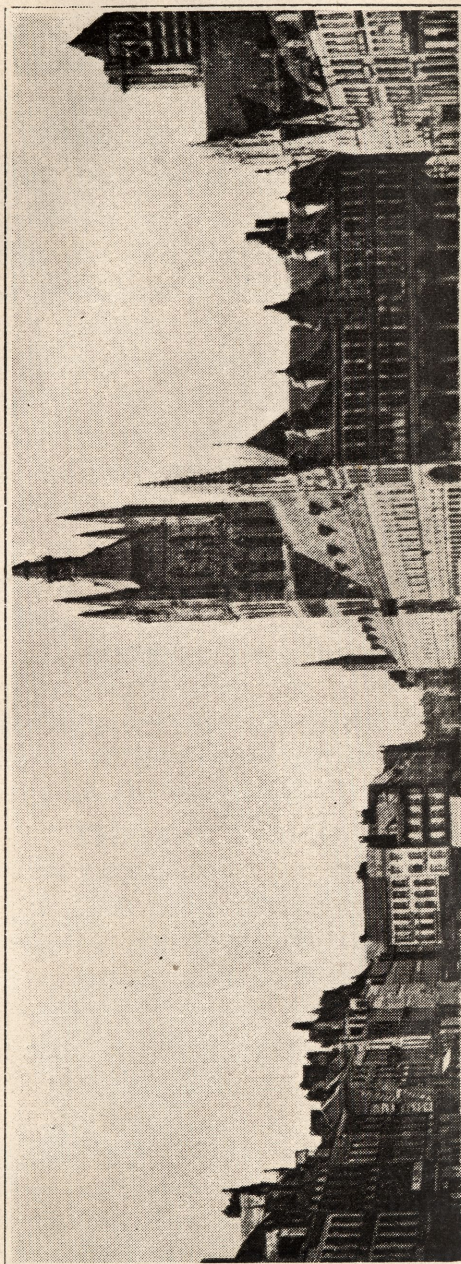
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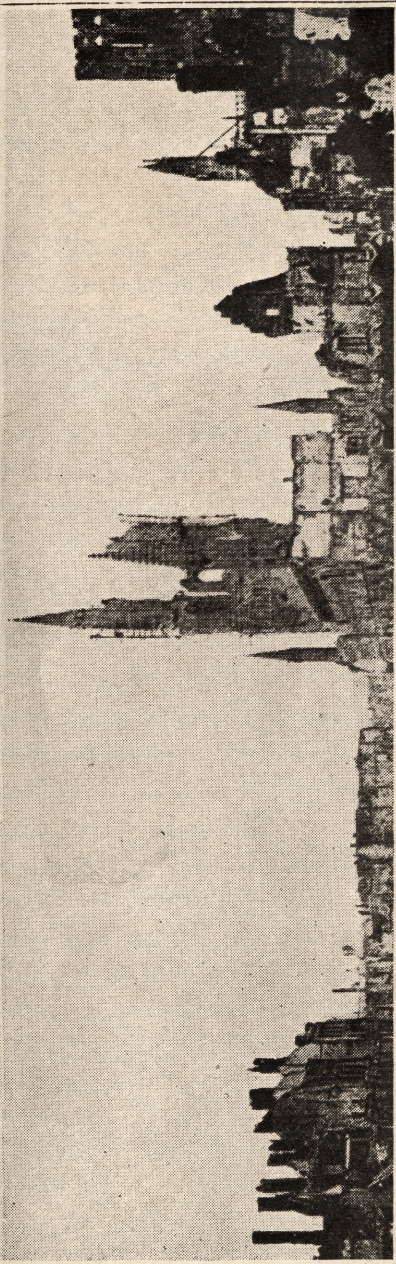
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dug-outs. They emerged and proceeded until they came to stone steps leading upwards.

"Where does that lead to?" the officer asked.

"Outside into the fresh air—can't you feel it?"

"And the mine—where is it?"

Julia was at her wit's end. Should he see the trick she had played him, he would certainly carry out his threat and shoot her, and thus her mission would be a failure. She must cause a stampede—something, to take that man's mind off the intention of shooting at her. Ah, yes! That oxygen tube offered help.

"Voila," she said, and going to it, she turned the tap on full, so that the oxygen came whistling out.

"Vite!" cried Julia. "Follow me outside. I forgot and turned the tap the wrong way, and in half a minute the mine will explode—quick! I show you safety!"

Terror-stricken, her escort ran pell-mell up the cellar steps, only too glad to follow where she led in this moment of awful danger. Outside, Julia espied a shaft of light between a slit in the boards of a back-room in the chateau.

"This way," she cried, and, plunging into the room which happened to be a signaller's quarters, she panted, "Get your rifles—here are Germans!" at the same time grasping the first rifle she could lay her hands on, and, wheeling around, shot point blank, by chance knocking the officer's revolver from his hand. Some of the signallers, at first surprised and doubting, were now up with rifles ready, and dashing outside, where they were confronted by a huddled quartette of Bosches, their hands up, to the command of Julia's imposing rifle. They were soon disarmed, and taken prisoners. Julia explained the situation, and was taken to the officer commanding that sector. Soon a party of pioneers with timber and tools ready for Billzac's release, and a scheme for making a rear attack on the enemy's front line by way of the tunnel, accompanied Julia for the great work.

When poor old Billzac, half starved and crushed almost to death, awoke at last from unconsciousness, he was in a base hospital. Julia, who had gained special permission to see him, was not far away, but it was a



couple of days before he was allowed, or even able, to speak to her.

"Julia," he whispered, "how long have you been with me."

"Not long enough," she replied.

"How long, then, have you wanted to be with me?" he asked.

"Since I first saw you at Cerise Farm," she said.

"Oh! Julia, then why didn't you tell me before, when I wanted you to?"

"Because, Billzac, I then thought too much of formalities and of other people. I thought we could not possibly be together, because I am Belgian—you are Australian. I am used to Belgian living—you have your Australian habits. I cannot perfectly speak your language—you cannot perfectly speak mine. We seemed so far apart. As my relations and your relations—what would they say? Mine would call me mad—yours would say you were a fool, and treat me with contempt. I thought we could not live happily together. So I told you a lie and said I was sworn to a Belgian soldier, so that you would no more try to make me your fiance—I thought it was for each other's good."

"Oh! Julia—and now—does it matter now, if our lives are somewhat different?"

"No! No! *ma chere* Billzac—*mon brave soldat*—it does not matter after all. When the first shells came that day at Cerise Farm I knew that I wanted you so much that nothing in the world mattered. I want you, and you want me—that is all that matters."

"Billzac's Aunt Agatha and several of her neices sat in the drawing-room sipping tea and discussing "the highly preposterous idea of Billzac bringing home as wife an awful foreigner."

"Well, as good as a foreigner you know my dears," Aunt Agatha was saying, "this terrible girl—this wench—he has married in Flanders—Flanders of all places! Not as though it were France or Belgium—but Flanders is only the scrapings up between the two places! I'm sure I can't see why he couldn't have waited until he reached home, and married some sensible girl he knows



from his own country—there's Mary and Clarice and Gertie—they've each sent him a parcel of comforts religiously every Christmas since he's been away—any of them would have made him a capital wife."

"Oh, I suppose," commented neice Vera "he fell in love with her after not seeing a woman for ages, and married her on the spur of the moment for want of something better to do. I daresay he's already sorry he married her."

"I'm sure she's fast," said Lily, "and has thrown sand in his eyes until he married her, and has only married him because she imagines all Australians to be wealthy."

"The cat! I shan't be civil to her."

"I shan't recognise her in the street."

Little did they know the true value of this "Foreign" girl. Little did they know what a real Romance brought Billzae and Julia together to a happy union—and that their lives and interests were knit so closely together by very drastic happenings wherein each found the others worth.





## SPORT IN THE LINE.

Bois Grenier, until they turned the water taps on, was generally a quiet spot in France, where some of those amenities which occurred between the opposing forces could take place—such as holding targets over one another's trenches for shooting practice, and signaling the results of the shooting.

It was at Bois Grenier that I saw two Diggers leap up suddenly, and leaning out of the trench so that they exposed themselves, take aim and fire

"What in the devil are you firing at like that?" I demanded.

"Couldn't let e'm go," one of them explained. "A couple of pheasants lobbed out there—and we got both of 'em."

"But they're no good to you out there," I said.

"They will be though, when we hop out and get them to-night," he replied confidently.

And they did get them too, together with a Fritz who had seen them fall, and had been in the act of "souveniring" them on his own account.

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## THE STRETCHER-BEARER JIBBED.

At the landing the stretcher-bearers started as keen as mustard to do their bit, and searched vigilantly for case. A pair of them were nearing the beach with a man whom they had met painfully limping, when shrapnel burst near and caused their "case" to leap from his stretcher, and bolt the rest of the distance at quite a decent pace. The fagged bearers wiped the perspiration from their faces, and stared. "Hey, come back!" yelled one of them. "No blanky fear," yelled back the "casualty," "I'm going while my luck's in!"

Rather chagrined the bearers were making back towards the line, when the call for stretcher-bearers came.



Investigating, they found a huddled figure under a bush, and heard a voice that requested a ride to the beach.

"Wounded?" they asked.

Yes."

"Can you walk?"

No."

"Crawl?"

"Well, I can just crawl."

"Well, get busy crawling! We're looking for somebody with no arms and legs to get along with."

The Gurkhas were of inestimable value to us at the landing at Gallipoli, working with their donkeys and mountain guns, taking ammunition up to the front line on their donkeys, and appearing at the right place at the right time with their handy little guns. One of these brave fellows, carting ammunition to the line, had his hand blown off by a bursting shell. He refused to be sent away, and, satisfied with a shell dressing placed over the shattered wrist, encouraged his ammunition-laden donkey on, and with a pathetic smile pointed towards the line. There was only one thing he recognised—that there were men up there depending on his donkey load of bullets—that was where his duty lay. Another of these fellows, seeing one of our boys killed by a Turkish sniper, immediately took the kukri from his belt and wormed his way through the dense undergrowth and young trees, and disappeared, but soon returned with a Turk's head hanging from his hand, and a grin of satisfaction on his face, as he showed us he had avenged our lad's death.



### ... WHY DINNER WAS LATE.

In 1918, when the Diggers gave pause to the ram-  
paging Hun before Amiens, the people who had hastily  
left their homes, without worrying about the removal of  
valuables, began to regain confidence, and return.  
Bluey, our company cook, had established his cook-  
house in a bonzer possie—the kitchen of a farmhouse—  
and was doing his usual worst in the way of “stoo”  
when Madame made her re-appearance. Beyond a “Bon  
jour, M’sieur,” she took no notice of Bluey, but, walk-  
ing to the fireplace, where he was tasting the stew, she  
thrust her hand up the chimney and from a hole in the  
side, drew out a large bundle of high-valued franc  
notes—there must have been a few thousand francs there  
at the least.

Dinner failed to materialise that day, and a search  
party went looking for the missing cook. They found  
him, black as a chimney sweep, smothered in soot, and  
swearing loudly.

He had been climbing every chimney in the village,  
but had failed to find any more franc-note mines.







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# War 1914 Peace when?

Undoubtedly the terrible and cruel World war, which embroiled the leading civilized nations since 1914, has manifested wonderful deeds of valour and chivalry on the part of Australian Soldiers, yet these fade away and would be forgotten by the masses unless continually rehearsed by repetition, such as Anzac Day with its mingled joy and sadness according to the circumstances.

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